

SITUATION REPORT NO. 3
INCIDENT NO. 2004-035
DATE: September 2, 2004 Time 3:30 p.m.

TO: Governor John Hoeven
State Capitol
Bismarck ND 58505

1. **NATURE OF DISASTER:** Wildland Fires – Drought conditions in areas of high fuel content have led to fires with extreme fire behavior ignited by various sources, including weather activity, agricultural and industrial operations, recreation and other human activity.
2. **DEATHS AND INJURIES:** No change from the previous reports.
3. **DAMAGES:** Fires recently reported to the State Operations Center (SOC) include:

Burleigh County: On 8/25/04, the N.D. Game and Fish Department Assistant Chief of the Wildlife Division reported a fire in a heavily-wooded area southeast of Bismarck in an area referred to as the “Desert” or Kimball Bottoms. The fire initially measured roughly the size of two football fields (two acres) and grew to 450 acres before firefighters contained the conflagration on 8/27/04. The fire flared up on 9/1/04 and was contained within a few hours.

Golden Valley County: On 9/1/04, the State Operations Center received notification of a grass fire in the extreme southeast corner of Golden Valley County, west of Bullion Butte. The U.S. Forest Service and the Golvea Fire Departments responded and extinguished the fire.

Grant County: The Cedar Valley Fire Department put out an 80-acre prairie fire started by farm equipment on 8/29/04 in the southeast portion of the county. A grass fire 15 miles northwest of New Leipzig was contained and extinguished on 8/30/04.

Hettinger County: An 8/29/04 fire on Conservation Reserve Program (CRP) land was reported 11 miles southeast of Mott. The Mott Fire Department extinguished the fire.

Slope County: On 9/1/04, the SOC received notification of a 200-plus acre wildfire, approximately 10 miles west of Amidon or 25 miles south of Medora. The fire is multi-jurisdictional, primarily on private and federal land.

The fire, named Deep Creek Fire, expanded to an estimated 1,000-plus acres within three hours and is threatening four ranches, including the Logging Camp, Hafele, Jacobson and H.T. ranches. By the morning of 9/2/04, the fire was covering 4,000 acres, stretching eight miles long and one mile wide, and fire authorities are concerned that it could double in size, possibly expanding to 10,000 acres. Winds have not been as strong as projected allowing aircraft to help battle the fire. Four single engine air-tankers (SEATs), one helicopter and one air attack group are on-scene. A heavy air tanker was able to drop a load of fire retardant on the fire line protecting the Logging Camp Ranch, effectively keeping the fire at bay. A helicopter has been used for bucket dumps. By 2:00 p.m. on 9/2/04, there had been no significant growth, but the potential still existed for the fire to grow. Crews are taking appropriate measures to protect structures in the area. The Logging Camp Ranch and the Jacobson Ranch are in imminent danger and occupants have been evacuated under the supervision of the Billings County Emergency Manager, who is assisting the Slope County Emergency Manager. There is high potential for other fires to break out in the southwest quarter of North Dakota.

Stark County: A 9/1/04 fire, located south of Richardton on N.D. Highway 8 and 44th St. SW, burned 1,500 acres of prairie land, including fences and tree rows. Vehicles destroyed include: one county vehicle and on four-wheel tractor along with the equipment it was pulling. The fire is currently contained. Officials for the Richardton Fire Department reported their equipment sustained damage.

4. **RESOURCES:**

LOCAL: Responders included public works departments, law enforcement agencies, communications centers, emergency management offices, fire and rescue, ambulance services, elected officials and administrative offices.

STATE: Agencies include the Governor's Office, N.D. Forest Service, State Fire Marshal's Office, N.D. State Land Department, N.D. Division of Emergency Management/State Radio, N.D. Department of Transportation, N.D. Game and Fish Department, N.D. Highway Patrol, N.D. National Guard and N.D. Parks and Recreation Department.

FEDERAL: The Dakota Prairie Grasslands (DPG) of the U.S. Forest Service (USFS), U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS), the Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) and National Park Service (NPS) have provided firefighting and equipment support. The National Weather Service (NWS) is monitoring weather conditions and providing area forecasts.

5. **VOLUNTEER ACTION:** The American Red Cross (ARC) and the Salvation Army have offered food and water in support of the Deep Creek firefighting effort.
6. **MAJOR ACTIONS:** On 9/2/04, Governor John Hoeven proclaimed a statewide fire emergency in response to fire conditions that exist throughout the state and efforts currently occurring in response to the Deep Creek Fire. Currently, the most critical fire danger area is the 11-county, southwestern quarter of the state, surrounding the Deep Creek Fire. Residents of all North Dakota counties are asked to be alert to the daily fire danger index and to note restrictions on certain activities in specific areas of the state. Guidelines for outdoor activity restrictions are contained in the North Dakota Rural Fire Danger Index Guide found at:
<http://www.state.nd.us/dem/info/firedanger.html>.

The Incident Commanders, in coordination with the SOC, requested a Type II Incident Short Team to help manage the Deep Creek Fire response. Plans call for the team to arrive the evening of 9/2/04.

Approximately 200 personnel have been deployed to the Deep Creek fire along with one Type-3 helicopter, 4 single-engine air tankers, 24 fire engines, and 1 air-attack group. Responders include firefighters from the Amidon, Rhome, Fryburg, Billings County and Bowman Fire Departments, the U.S. Forest Service, N.D. Forest Service, Slope and Billings Sheriff's Departments, the FWS, BIA and NPS. Bowman County officials provided a mobile Emergency Operations Center (EOC), which is on scene, and have activated their EOC to coordinate logistics support.

In response to fire conditions, the state has taken the following measures:

- Activated the State Operations Center, which are being staffed by the Governor's Office, the North Dakota Forest Service and NDDEM;
- Deployed NDFS equipment and personnel to the scene to assist with monitoring and fire management;
- Activated the State Fire Marshal's Office; and,
- Deployed North Dakota Highway Patrol to help with traffic control needs.

Also, on standby and available to assist on scene and with other fires that may occur are: the North Dakota Department of Transportation; Game and Fish Department; National Guard; State Land Department; and Parks and Recreation Department.

Food and drinking water requirements in support of the firefighting effort are currently being contracted through the North Dakota Fire Dispatch Center in Upham, N.D.

Responders to the 8/25/04 Kimball Bottoms fire in Burleigh County included: the Bismarck Rural Fire Department, Bismarck/Burleigh Combined Communications, Burleigh County Emergency Management, Burleigh County Highway Department and the Burleigh County Sheriff's Office.

Responders to the 9/1/04 Richardton fire included: the Richardton Fire Department, Taylor Fire Department, Gladstone Fire Department, Hebron Fire Department, private contractors and Stark County Sheriff's Office

7. ASSISTANCE NEEDED: None requested at this time.
8. OUTSIDE HELP ON SCENE: No change from previous reports.
9. OTHER INFORMATION: The N.D. Division of Emergency Management's Situation Reports are posted on the Division's Internet home page. The address is <http://www.state.nd.us/dem>.

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Douglas C. Friez, State Director